



WORKERS SAY LEAVE

TUA **EU**

Trade Unionists Against the EU

Want the madness of austerity and plunder of the people's wealth to stop? **Vote to leave the EU**

As internationalists, trade unionists have always been at the forefront of arguing for the self-determination and peaceful coexistence of nations.

We reject the domination of workers by imperialist blocs like the EU, and argue for intergovernmental co-operation and workplace democracy. Continuing EU membership is only in the interest of the employers. No one should be fooled; both the in and out blocs of the right have a corporate agenda.

Our history in Britain is linked to the extension of the democratic franchise in the workplace and in Parliament. Were it not for the trade union pioneers and later the suffragettes, Britain would be dominated by a handful of hapless and vicious landowners buying Parliamentary seats. Universal suffrage enabled our predecessors, particularly after World War II, to build a more democratic economy and society.

The fierce reaction to this democratic momentum - which had tipped the balance of equality and welfare in favour of workers - was the creation by the corporations of an anti-democratic political structure called the EU, underpinned by a single market and currency.

No one in Britain has voted on the neoliberal Treaties that underpin this unaccountable super-state. A referendum was held in 1975 on joining a Common Market, but official documents now released show the real plan at the time was to bring countries into a political and economic union in order to make individual nations subservient.

In Britain we have no say in who really controls the power in the EU. All of the key power brokers, the Central Bank Directors and the European Commissioners, are unelected. And all of them have embedded neoliberalism into the key instruments of the EU.

The myth of a social Europe is now well and truly over. Isn't the suffering of Greek workers proof of that? Let alone the misery of mass unemployment that has plagued the EU countries for decades. And now a democratically elected socialist government in Portugal is being told by the EU to abandon its anti-austerity agenda. The message is clear: the EU trumps national democracy.

Some trade unionists fear that leaving the EU may lead to a loss of some employment and social protections enacted under EU laws. Wouldn't Cameron and Osborne be worse than Merkel and Junkers? The truth is that a range of anti-worker, anti-trade union initiatives are already being encouraged right across the EU, as we can testify with the regressive trade union bill. We need to be more confident, raise our aspirations and elect a government that is on our side.

Unlike our predecessors in the movement, we do not have to risk our lives or imprisonment in our fight for democracy.

We simply have to vote to leave the EU.



20 REASONS FOR TRADE UNIONISTS TO VOTE TO LEAVE THE EU

1

The EU = TTIP: The EU has negotiated secret trade deals, such as the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) between the EU and the US, which institutionalises irreversible privatisation and lower safety standards. Such treaties create secret courts that would allow corporations to sue nation states for huge sums of money. The European Commission's own examination of TTIP impact on employment would be a loss of a million jobs and a significant reduction in wages. (See www.waronwant.org/ttip).

2

No to the Euro: Although Denmark and Britain currently have an opt-out under the Lisbon Treaty they must adopt the euro at some point which would mean loss of control over interest and exchange rates. This currency is controlled by the European Central Bank which has largely brought about the growing crisis in Greece. A vote to stay in the EU will encourage a renewed campaign to get Britain in the euro currency.

3

State aid not allowed: Within the EU Britain is forbidden to subsidise or protect an industry or enterprise and the jobs involved. The Lisbon Treaty enshrines capitalism as the only economic system permitted. This in part explains why the EU is deaf to the lobbying of British manufacturers, or the recent lobby of steel unions for example, to protect our industries, what is left of them.

4

Competitive tendering: Tenders for public sector contracts across the EU have to be accepted within Britain even if this means job losses. This common EU policy overrides the UK law and the Westminster Parliament. We say public and government sector procurement should be free to prioritise British based suppliers to boost manufacturing and rebuild our real economy. Other countries in the EU have avoided some of these restrictions because the EU has planned for them to focus on certain

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industries. Under the EU regional policies, Germany got engineering and Britain financial services for example.

Cost: The UK pays £53 million every day towards the EU budget, around £14 billion each year. Britain also paid out taxpayer's money to the European Financial Stability Mechanism, a fund propping up the euro even though Britain is not in it. This mechanism had underpinned the historic erosion of public spending in our country and throughout the continent. Britain's net payments into the EU if spent in Britain would significantly assist in rebuilding our industrial and public service infrastructure.

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Fiscal compact: The European Fiscal Compact consolidates the Maastricht criteria for the single currency known as the Stability and Growth Pact. Member states face annual fines up to 0.1 per cent of GDP if they fail to enact "implementation law" to cut spending deficits.

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Permanent austerity: The strict criteria of Economic and Monetary Union limit public sector expenditure and government borrowing preventing states from re-inflating their economies. This is why no government in Europe can spend what it wants on its own people.

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Vulnerable work: The EU is promoting zero-hours contracts, casualisation and low pay as a part of its structural adjustment programme. It promotes labour market "flexibility," while claiming to provide non-existent 'minimum protections' - 'flexicurity' is a made-up word by which this model is sold.

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Europe 2020: Europe 2020 is a ten-year EU strategy launched in 2010 to 'boost jobs and growth' by promoting more liberalisation and deepening the internal market which is already weakening social welfare and undermining workers' rights. Historic social protection

legislation is collapsing and cannot compensate for the ravages of mass unemployment. Unemployment has consistently been over 20 million in the EU and often exceeded the total equivalent size of the whole of the British workforce. The EU is the world's low growth area.

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Trade union rights: The suspension of trade union collective bargaining is a strict condition of EU "bailouts" in Ireland, Portugal, Romania and Greece. The European Commission, IMF and the European Central Bank, the Troika, now directly intervene in wage negotiations. Trade union rights are an obstacle to EU plans for restructuring labour markets.

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EU court rulings: A number of European Court of Justice rulings have found against trade unions by claiming that business 'rights to establishment' trump workers' rights to defend themselves. This has allowed employers to batter down minimum standards won at a national level.

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Transport: Rail networks across Europe have been broken up and privatised according to EU directives such as 91/440 and other legislation. EU policy is also designed to facilitate transport of goods in large lorries unsuitable for Britain's roads. Britain's continuing membership of the EU makes the renationalisation of the railways illegal.

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Postal services: Postal services have been privatised according to EU directives 97/67/EG and 2002/39/EG. This allows corporations to cherry pick postal services in a highly inefficient system whereby the higher costs are passed on to the public with a poorer service.

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Public services: Various EU directives, regulations, policies and the EMU criteria force public services into the private sector. Privatisation is now moving onto education, health, prison systems and deep into local authorities. EU 'bailout' loans are conditional on selling public sector institutions. The Lisbon Treaty was needed so badly by the corporations to open up in particular the British markets in health and education.

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CAP: The Common Agricultural Policy, which costs every family £1,200 a year in higher food bills, is a mechanism whereby taxpayers' money is

transferred to large farmer's bank accounts often to take land out of food production. A large portion of the EU budget is used to prop up CAP.

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CFP: Under the Common Fisheries Policy the fishing industry and fishing communities have been all but destroyed. Unfair quota systems, limits on boat size and times to fish and type and amounts permitted to land have had a devastating effect on the industry. We should have control over our own fishing grounds.

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Militarism: The EU has its own Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) to develop its own military wing. EU military forces are active in the Balkans, Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. The CSDP has allowed the development of armed drones, economic support for the arms trade and an armed European Gendarmerie Force (EGF). Just because peace in Europe coincided with the formation of the EU does not mean the latter caused the former. The EU was quick to support the German led drive to the east when it supported the war on Yugoslavia and more recently sought EU and NATO control over Ukraine.

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Corruption: Even the European Commission has admitted that the extent of corruption in EU is "breathtaking", costing £100 billion annually. This is equivalent to the bloc's annual budget. Auditors have refused to sign off its accounts for over a decade.

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Democracy: The EU is the antithesis of democracy. The EU government is the unelected and unaccountable European Commission which legislates and proposes policies to the Councils of Ministers. The European Parliament has only very limited powers of 'co-decision' with the Commission it cannot initiate legislation. The Parliament is firmly dominated by the right.

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Stemming economic decline: Britain has been all but de-industrialised, losing nearly all manufacturing, shipbuilding and coal mining since joining in 1973. Controls on the export of capital or profit are forbidden under EU law. However there are no prohibitions on moving whole industries to sites where larger profits can be made.

TEN LIES ABOUT EU MEMBERSHIP

1

Britain would lose over three million jobs: EU supporters and the media often claim that 3.5 million jobs will disappear if Britain leaves the EU. This random figure was first published in 2004 by the National Institute of Economic and Social Research. Yet its director Jonathan Portes has since disowned this research, describing it as “past [its] sell-by date”. The fact-checking organisation Full Fact points out that the research actually: “still doesn’t show how many are dependent on UK membership”. (See The big jobs lie www.tuau.co.uk)

2

The EU protects workers: The EU is promoting zero-hours contracts, casualisation and poverty pay. The European TUC warns that “cuts in salaries, cuts in public services and weakening collective bargaining rights are all on the agenda”. The so-called “social Europe” agenda has not saved one job and the EU is in reality delivering an “anti-social Europe” by replacing the concept of secure jobs with precarious employment. Exploiting a reserve army of cheap labour is a core EU structural adjustment strategy. (See The strange death of social Europe www.tuau.co.uk).

3

The EU is internationalist: The EU is essentially formed of six former broken empires in a temporary alliance. They are trying to resurrect their global influence as part of revitalising capitalism and to project their economic and geopolitical interests across the world together or separately. This is more correctly described as imperialism, the opposite of internationalism.

4

Britain couldn’t trade with Europe: Britain outside the EU could still trade with European states. The EU sells a lot more to us than we sell to them. In 2011 there was a trade deficit of nearly £50bn, which rose to £109.2bn by 2014. It seems unlikely that the EU would seek to disrupt a trade which is so beneficial to itself. World Trade Organisation rules also lay down basic rules for international trade. The most detailed economic studies of trade conclude leaving the EU would make no difference, indeed it may open new international opportunities.

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Britain could not survive outside a trading bloc: Major economies such as Japan are not in a trading bloc while the EU is, in fact, a world economic black spot and its share of world GDP is forecast to decline to 15 per cent in 2020, down from 26 per cent in 1980. Norway, Iceland and Switzerland are not in the EU, yet they export far more per capita to the EU than the UK does.

6

The EU has kept peace in Europe: While Germany has not gone to war with France since the EU was founded, a major EU objective has long been to build a European Army. Former Commission President Jacques Delors said that “we need a European Army to fight the resources wars of the 21st century”. EU member states attacked Yugoslavia, invaded Iraq along with the US and forced regime change in Libya with appalling consequences. EU military forces have also been active in Afghanistan and Africa. Just because peace in Europe coincided with the formation of the EU does not mean the latter caused the former. Correlation does not prove causation. In that period, we had the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc, NATO and the Warsaw Pact, any of them can claim to have kept the peace in Europe. But the EU was quick to support the German led drive to the east when it supported the war on Yugoslavia and more recently sought EU and NATO control over Ukraine.

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The EU will get more democratic: This is impossible as the unelected Commission along with the Council of Ministers decide legislation which are passed directly or down through other EU institutions to member states. The European Parliament has no powers to legislate or change how the EU operates.

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The EU acts as a counter to the US: This does not stand up to simple examination with issues such as TTIP which bolts the European Single Market to the US market. The US also considers the EU as the economic wing of NATO. The US establishment is very firmly behind the campaigns to get Britain to stay in the EU.

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Outside the EU Britain must implement regulations without having a say: We have very little say within the EU and we would have far more leverage as an independent sovereign nation and the world’s sixth largest economy. The UK currently has only 12.6 per cent of voting power ‘say’ in the EU and the Lisbon Treaty ensured the loss of Britain’s veto in many more policy areas.

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You won’t be able to travel around Europe without EU ‘free movement’ rules: People travelled around Europe before EU ‘free movement’ rules were introduced in 2004 and people will still be able to travel between countries if Britain withdrew from the EU. The latest version of this from the big airline corporates is that cheap travel will be a thing of the past outside the EU. It is not the EU that sets fuel prices and airport tariffs. Airlines have the biggest say on ticket prices.



THE EU ISN'T WORKING



John Major's Tory government privatised Britain's railways twenty years ago using EU rail directive 91/440. Despite this unmitigated disaster of deaths, fare hikes and lack of accountability, Brussels is now imposing the same EU privatisation model on the rest of the member states.

The EU is entering the final stages of a 15-year process to open up all postal services to 'competition' which began with the first Postal Services Directive 97/67/EC, adopted in 1997.

And now due to EU competition law, the steel industry in this country faces extinction and is heading the same way as the coal, shipbuilding, train building and many other industries.

As the GMB union has said: "The EU Commission is now directly

responsible for bringing more misery to the steel industry that has been rocked with job losses and communities that are being destroyed".

No person or industry is safe from the EU's neo-liberal model of privatisation, deregulation and public spending cuts; and as a member of the EU there is nothing we can do about it.

TUA EU wants to see a reasoned and full debate in the trade union movement and can provide speakers for meetings and conferences and information and articles for websites and journals as well as contributions to educational events.

VOTE TO LEAVE THE EU



Please contact us on

www.tuaeu.co.uk

Campaign Against Euro Federalism

www.caef.org.uk

Peoples Movement (Ireland)

www.people.ie

Labour leave

www.labourleave.org